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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, AND S/P (JAMES)  
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TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM PINR SU

SUBJECT: SPLA SECRETARY-GENERAL SEES CRISIS BREWING IN  
SOUTH; NCP INFIGHTING CRITICAL

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CAMERON HUME; REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: The National Congress Party has lost the political will to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, while the Sudan People's Liberation Movement lacks the capacity to deliver a peace dividend, SPLM/A Secretary-General Pagan Amum told the Charge on June 23. Though a crisis in the South was not imminent, it was brewing. The international community was distracted by Darfur, and was no longer engaged in the North-South peace process. Worse, the NCP was preoccupied with maintaining its own power -- even if meant destroying the Sudanese state. Though the NCP might be persuaded to accept democratic politics, much depended on a the relationship between President Bashir and Vice President Taha. International pressure could be helpful, but only if it gave Bashir a real choice and showed him a way out. End Summary.

The SPLA's Metternich -- Sort Of

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¶2. (C) Pagan Amum Okech is part Marxist theoretician, part guerrilla commander, and part urbane diplomatist. The fortysomething Shilluk tribesman from Malakal, in South Sudan's Upper Nile State, made his first foray into politics in 1982, when he led a group of Sudanese dissidents to exile in Mengistu's Ethiopia. He later joined John Garang's nascent Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), and spent two years "training" in Cuba. After serving in various military and administrative posts, he emerged as the SPLM/A's chief spokesman in 1994, and became its Secretary for Trade and Humanitarian Aid in 1998. He was also one of SPLM/A's chief negotiators -- perhaps even the key negotiator -- of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). After years of life in the jungle, Amum is now back in Juba, serving as SPLM/A's first Secretary-General, and trying to transform a rebel military organization into a democratic political party. "I've been living in the world's most expensive IDP camp for the past year," Amum joked, as he welcomed CDA Hume to his new apartment. "It's nice to sleep in something besides a tent."

NCP Losing Political Will, SPLA Lacking Capacity

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¶3. (C) He is not optimistic about the future of the CPA. Though he recognized that things tended to move slowly in Sudan, Amum believes the National Congress Party (NCP) had lost the political will to implement the agreement. There were differences about the oil transfer accounts. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) had destroyed barracks and other facilities while redeploying, to deny them to the SPLA. SAF intelligence continued to support other armed groups in the South, like the Lord's Resistance Army. The police remained

highly militarized, the elections commission was not yet in place, and restrictions on democratic parties were still on the books. "There is more freedom, to be sure, but there is still an air of totalitarianism," he said quietly.

¶4. (C) There were problems within the SPLA as well. The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) lacks the capacity to deliver a peace dividend; there were still no new schools, roads, or medical facilities. Social services in the South were worse than before the CPA, he argued, while GoSS ministers and SPLM members drove around in new Toyota Land Cruisers. Public opinion was not favorable, he admitted. "This highly bureaucratic SPLM and GoSS cannot survive." Amum had urged GoSS ministers to come forward with "deliverables" -- quick impact projects -- that could be put in place before the end of 2006, and bolster the Government's legitimacy. He also believed the GoSS also had to engage the World Bank, with an eye towards long term development. "The NCP has given us an easy ride, because we can always blame them. But we have to turn things around ourselves."

¶5. (C) Though Amum cautioned that he was not expecting a crisis "tomorrow morning," he did see a crisis brewing. The international community was distracted by Darfur -- justifiably, he acknowledged -- but the lack of international involvement in the North-South peace process was forcing the NCP and SPLM to try to solve their differences on their own. Neither party, however, was accustomed to solving disputes through political dialogue. "The likelihood of renewed civil war is increasing, just as the likelihood of CPA implementation is decreasing," he reasoned. The international community needed to press both sides to get progress.

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The NCP's Sucidial Strategy; Bashir vs. Taha

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¶6. (C) Divisions within in NCP made this process even harder. Few in the NCP really favored the CPA, Amum believed; most were "locked into a mindset that would lead to the collapse of the Sudanese state on top of the Sudanese people." In reality, Amum said, Sudan is a failed state, but one that remains somewhat functional. It was like a house that is on the verge of falling apart: when one corner of the roof falls in, everyone runs to another corner. But as soon the roof is fixed, another corner falls in, and people run someplace else. The NCP understands this reality, Amum said, but instead of attempting to repair the house, they actually want it to fall down. "The NCP thinks if it retains control of the Nile Valley -- a triangle from Dongola, to Sennar, to El Obeid -- it can wait while the rest of the country -- the South, Darfur, and the East -- falls into complete disorder. After that, the international community will ask the NCP to police these areas; the NCP can rebuild the state on its own terms." This strategy would be a disaster not only for Sudan, Amum predicted, but for also Chad, Eritrea, and even Egypt. Moreover, though Western leaders might not think this type of scenario is possible, the NCP does -- and so does Al-Qaeda. "They're more focused on Sudan today than they are on any other country," Amum argued.

¶7. (C) Surely, Hume suggested, there must be another way: if the NCP believes it can survive in a democracy, it will be less tempted to destroy the state to save itself. Amum agreed, eloquently noting that this alternative provided all the more reason to reinforce the CPA, and support the SPLA. There was a power struggle within the NCP, and President Omar al-Bashir was in the middle of it. "Bashir is an emotional man," he observed -- noting the President's recent outbursts about UN peacekeeping forces in Darfur -- but "he does have some basic goodness, and even a type of innocence." Bashir had been "taken in" by Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha, Amum said, joking that Taha had "taken him places and left him there." Taha had set traps for Bashir in Abyei, where

Bashir had rejected the boundary commission report without really understanding it, and now in Darfur, where Bashir had refused to allow UN peacekeepers without considering the alternatives. "Ali is trying to improve his image," Amum mused about his old negotiating partner from Naivasha. "And Bashir is helping him."

"Positive Pressure" Needed

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**¶8. (C)** Pressure from the international community might help, Amum suggested, but not "negative pressure" in the form of more sanctions. Rather, the international community ought to apply "positive pressure," Amum said. "I'm talking about taking sanctions away, showing Bashir a way out, and giving him a real choice."

HUME